

# GREATEST MOHAMMEDAN UNIVERSITY

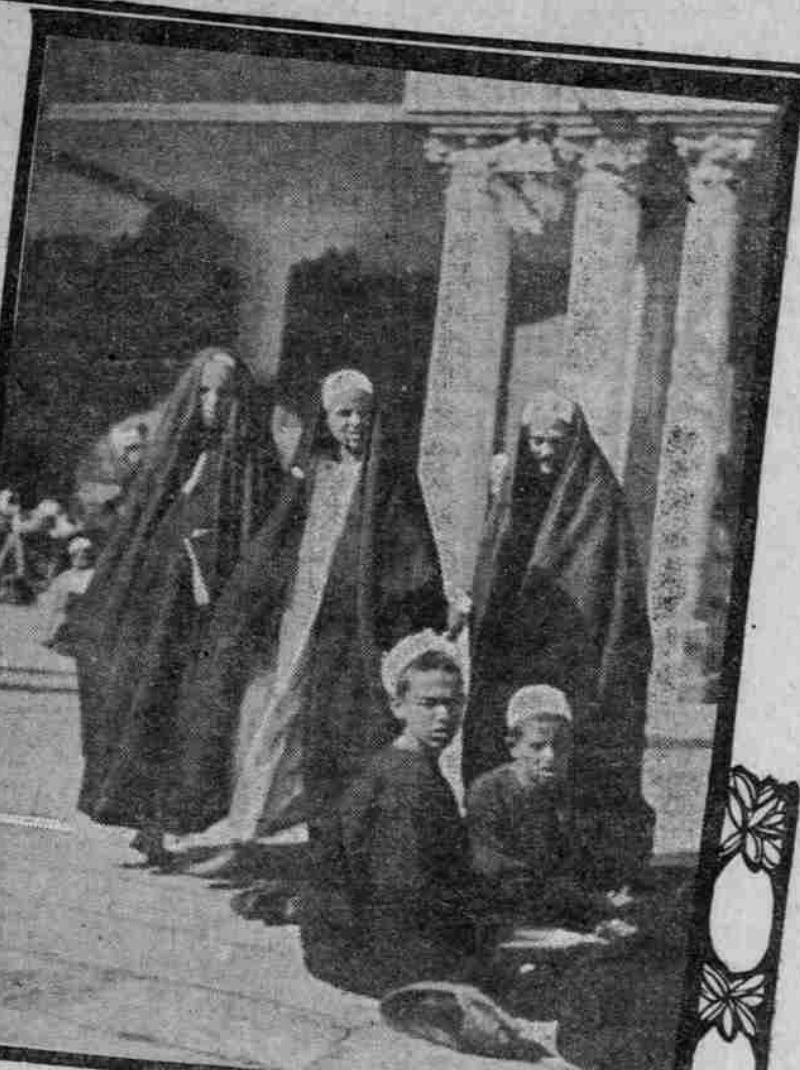
FRANK CARPENTER TELLS OF QUEER STUDIES IN A COLLEGE WHERE THE TEACHERS WORK WITH OUT PAY

BY FRANK C. CARPENTER. HAVE just returned from a visit to the biggest university of the Mohammedan world. It has more students than any of our colleges, and twice as many as our Harvard, Yale or Cornell. It has all told, over 9,000, and its professors number 240. Its students come from every country where Mohammedans flourish. There are hundreds here from India, and come from Malaysia and Java. There is a large number from Morocco and also from Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli. There are Nubians as black as your hat, Syrians and Turks as yellow as rich Jersey cream, and boys from southeastern Europe with faces as fair as our own. There are long-gowned, turbaned Persians, fierce-eyed Afghans and brown-skinned men from the Sudan and from about Kuka, Borna and Timbaktu. The students are of all ages from fifteen to 75, and some have spent their lives in the college.

**A Mighty Mohammedan Force.** This university has been in existence for almost a thousand years. It was founded A. D. 888, and from that time to this it has been educating the followers of the Prophet. It is today perhaps the strongest force among these people in Egypt. Ninety-two per cent of the inhabitants of the Nile Valley are Mohammedans and the most of the native officials have been educated here. There are at least 25,000 men in the public service among its graduates, and the judges of the villages, the teachers in the mosque schools, and the Imams or priests who serve throughout Egypt are connected with it. They hold the university in



"I CAME INTO A GREAT COURT"



"MANY LONG TURBANED MEN WITH BOOKS UNDER THEIR ARMS WERE STANDING ABOUT"



A CORNER IN THE EL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY

"I WAS MADE TO PUT ON A PAIR OF SLIPPERS OVER MY BOOTS BEFORE I WENT IN."

the highest regard, and an order from the professors would be as much, if not more, respected than one from the khedivial government. The education in this university is almost altogether Mohammedan. Its curriculum is about the same as it was a thousand years ago, and the chief studies are the Koran and Koranic law, together with the sacred traditions of the religion and perhaps a little grammar, prosody and rhetoric. Within the past few years there have been attempts to extend its sphere, and it now has thirteen government professors, but their teaching is done outside the university itself. A number of the professors are also teaching in the government schools connected with the mosques of the Egyptian villages, but even there the Koran takes up half the time and religion is far more important than science.

**How Egyptians Study Their Bible.** Indeed it is wonderful how much time these Egyptians spend on their Bible. The Koran is their primer, their first and second reader and also their college textbook. As soon as a baby is born, the call to prayer is shouted in its ear, and when it begins to speak its father first teaches it to say the creed, which runs somewhat as follows: "There is no God but God; Mohammed is the apostle of God," and also "Wherefore exalted be God, the king, the truth! There is no God but he! The Lord of the glorious throne." When the boy reaches 5 or 6 he starts to the mosque school, and there squats down, cross-legged, and sways to and fro as he yells aloud the texts of the Koran. He studies the alphabet by writing with a black brush text on a slate of wood or tin, and he pounds away from year to year committing the Koran to memory. There are now more than 200,000 pupils in the Egyptian schools, of whom a majority are under 15 years of age. By a recent census it was found that over 50,000 of these boys could recite a good part of the Mohammedan bible, and that 400 had memorized the whole from beginning to end. Another 400 were able to recite one-half of it from memory, while 300 could correctly give three-fourths of it. When it is remembered that the Koran contains 114 divisions and in the neighborhood of 30,000 words, it will be seen what this means. I venture that there are not 400 children in the United States who can recite the New Testament without looking at the book, and that with our vast population we have not 50,000 boys who can recite even one book of our Bible from memory and not mispronounce a word.

The Mohammedans revere their bible quite as much as we do ours. While it is being read they will not allow it to lie upon the floor, and no one may read or touch it without first washing himself. It is written in Arabic, and its style is considered a model. They believe that it was revealed by God to Mohammed, and that it is eternal. It is not written at the first, but was entirely committed to memory, and it is in that way that it is still taught to a large extent. I understand that the

present Khedive can recite the most of it. During my interview with his majesty, Tewfik Pasha, he told me that he could begin at the back and by memory alone recite the Koran clear to the front. The better classes of Mohammedans have beautiful copies of this book. They have some bound in gold with the texts illuminated, and the university here has a collection of fine editions which is looked upon as one of its greatest treasures.

### Nine Thousand Bald Heads.

This famous Mohammedan university is situated in the heart of business Cairo. When I rode to it today on my donkey I passed through a mile or so of covered bazaars, thronged with turbaned men and veiled women and walled with shops in which long-gowned Egyptians were selling goods and plying their trades. The university is known as the Mosque of El-Azhar, which is one of the oldest mosques in the world. It covers several acres, and the streets about it are largely taken up with industries connected with the university. One of the chief occupations is bookbinding and bookbinding, and another to head dressing. Every Mohammedan has his head shaved several times a week, and in this college there are 9,000 bald-headed students. The scholar who would appear here with our ordinary college football cut would not be admitted. The students wear turbans of white, black or green, and there is not a hair under them except on the top of the crown, where a little tuft may be left, that the owner may be more easily pulled into heaven. My way went through this street of the barbers. There were a number of them working on the heads of the students. The barbers made them kneel down to be shaved, and I saw one or two lying with their heads in the laps of the men who were shaving them. The barbers used no paper, wiping the shaving on the face of the victims instead. At the end they gave the head, face and ears a good washing.

I approached the entrance of the university I saw many young, long-gowned, turbaned men, with their books under their arms, standing about and waiting for their turn. Each student has his shoes in his hand when he enters the gate, and I was made to put on a pair of slippers over my boots before I went in. The slippers were of yellow sheepskin and a turbaned servant tied them on with red strings.

### Mohammedan Students at Work.

Entering the gate, I came into a great stone-flagged court, upon which the study halls of this university face. The court was surrounded by arcades upheld by marble pillars, and in the arcades and in the immense rooms beyond were thousands upon thousands of students. They sat in groups on the floor, listening to the professors, who were lecturing on various subjects, swearing back and forth as they sang out their words of wisdom.

Some of the groups were studying aloud, and altogether the confusion was as great as that at the Tower of Babel when the tongues of the builders were changed. There were at least 6,000 men, all talking at once, and some, it seemed to me, were shouting at the tops of their voices. I had many unfriendly looks as I made my way through the mass, and narrowly escaped being mobbed when I took snapshots of the professors and students at work under the bright sun, which beat down upon the court. The inmates of this school are among the most fanatical of the Mohammedans, and I have since learned that the Christian who moves among them is in danger of personal violence.

I spent some time in this university, going from hall to hall and making notes. In one section I found a class of blind boys who were learning the Koran, and I am told that they are more fanatical

than any of the others. In another place I saw 40 Persians listening to a professor. They were sitting on the ground, and the professor himself sat on the floor with his bare feet doubled up under him. I could see his yellow toes sticking out of his black gown. He was lecturing on theology and the students were attentive. Another class near by was taking down the notes of a lecture. Each had a sheet of tin, which looked as though it might have been cut from an oil can, and he wrote upon this in ink with a reed style. The letters were in Arabic and I could not tell what they meant.

As I passed through the halls I saw some of the boys mending their clothes, and others spreading their wash out in the sun to dry. They did not seem

ashamed of their poverty and I saw much to admire. The professors serve for nothing and support themselves by teaching in private houses or by reading the prayer at the mosque. It is considered a great honor to be a professor here, and the most learned men of the Mohammedan world are glad to lecture in the El-Azhar without reward. In fact the only man about the institution who receives a salary is the present, who has 10,000 piasters a year. This seems much until one knows that the piaster is only 5 cents, and that it takes this many of them to make \$500. I was asked as to the government of the university, and was told that it had a principal and under professors. All students are under the direct control of the university, and if they misbehave outside its walls the police hand them over to the collegiate authorities for punishment. The students are exempt from military service, and it is said that many enter the institution for this reason alone. There seem to be no limitations as to age nor as to the time one may spend at the college. I saw boys between 6 and 8 years of age, and many of the older boys were as old as 70 or 80. I saw boys between 6 and 8 years of age, and many of the older boys were as old as 70 or 80. I saw boys between 6 and 8 years of age, and many of the older boys were as old as 70 or 80.

Education in Egypt. This university has but little to do with the great movement of modern education which is now going on in Egypt. It is rather religious than educational, and the live, active educational forces outside it are two. One of these is the United Wesleyan Church and its mission school, of which I will write later, when I visit their college at Assiout, about 300 miles farther up the Nile Valley, and the other is the government, directed by the British, who are collecting the taxes and administering all matters of importance in Egypt today. In addition to these there are about 200 schools supported by the Coptic, who, by the way, are the most intelligent of the native population.

Egypt was very illiterate when the British took hold of the administration. Literacy is now getting along all right, and the desire for learning is increasing, however, and the system of common schools which has been inaugurated is being rapidly developed. There are now over 10,000 schools in the country, with something like 20,000 teachers and perhaps 250,000 pupils. There are a number of

water and call it a barrel of whiskey. Can you beat that game? The boxers have got into the swing with the rest of the business men, and the falls are not getting at all light to be coming to them. I'm not doing any preaching, but I will give this tip, that unless we take the swift flop to the old way of doing things you might as well try to preserve snowballs in the warm place as to expect the small man to smile and look pretty while he's taking the packages that are being handed to him.

**Strong Praise for American Firemen** I was walking down Broadway, New York, one night with Colonel Blake, the West Pointer, who was at the head of a part of the Irish Brigade in the Boer War, when a lot of fire trucks came along on the jump. Blake grabbed me over the edge of the sidewalk to see the procession dash by.

"These firemen in New York, Boston and some other large cities," says Blake, "watch my eye every time. I've seen artillery go into action over in South Africa, where there are some of the best horse handlers in the world, but the American firemen put out a fire in a way that just stirs my blood."

I consider that one of the best compliments that has ever been paid to our American dream is that they ought to know it. Colonel Blake was a Texan, he was at West Point and in the regular cavalry, and he's seen some Indians and Boers ride for their everlasting lives. Yet he put out firemen up with the best of them.

I was glad to hear this compliment from such a noted fighter as Blake, and the reason I'm writing it is for the firemen to read it and throw out their chests a little. Colonel Blake was no hot-air merchant, and what he said struck me as a very remarkable conclusion for him to arrive at, knowing all the rough riding he had done in the Indian and Boer Wars. When the American firemen get such testimonials as the above, I advise them to paste them up where they can see them once in a while.

**Moose Attacks a Horse.** Kennebec Journal. Three young men from Milltown, near Calais, went out into the country districts recently to spend the day and left their old horse standing under

private schools, several normal schools and also devoted to special training. In the last few years a system of technical education has been inaugurated, and the Government now has model workshops at Bouac and Assiout. It has a school of agriculture here at Cairo, a school of engineering and schools of law and medicine.

### The Village Schools.

An important movement has been the introduction of modern studies into the village schools belonging to the Mohammedans. These were formerly, and are to some extent now under the University of El-Azhar. They were connected with the mosques and were taught by Mohammedan priests. They were supported by the people themselves, and also by a Mohammedan religious organization known as the Wak, which has an enormous endowment. There are something like 10,000 of these schools here and there over the lower part of the Nile Valley, and they had an attendance of something like 200,000. They taught little more than the Arabic language, the Koran and reading, writing and arithmetic. Lord Cromer wanted to bring these schools under the Ministry of Public Instruction and introduce modern studies. He tried to force the teachers to come under him, but he refused. He then offered to give every mosque school that would come in an appropriation of 50 cents for every boy and 75 cents for every girl, and this apparently solved the problem. The village schools are rapidly adopting modern methods.

Already 6,000 of them are subject to the government, and within a short time they will all be under the immediate direction of its educational department. At present it is necessary to handle them carefully and to make the religious studies among the most important. Now, the half of each school day is set apart for the study of the Koran and the other half for secular studies, and it is said that such of the Mohammedan scholars as do well are more likely to get appointments under the government than if they were Christians or Copts.

### Female Education.

The girls of Egypt are beginning to go to school. For a long time it was hard to persuade their parents to send them either to the government schools or private schools, but of late some of the native educated women have been given places as teachers in many of the schools, and many of the girls are now preparing themselves for school work. Other parents are sending their daughters to school to give them a good general education, as the educated boys want educated women for wives. There are at present something like 2000 girls' schools, with an attendance of over 10,000 girl pupils. A movement is now going on to establish village schools for girls, and the time will come when there will be girls' schools all over Egypt, and the Mohammedan women may become educated.

### Beneficial Egyptians.

We are apt to think that the only kind of charity is Christian charity. I find that there is Mohammedan charity as well, and that many of the richer Moslems give money toward education and other such things. I have spoken of the endowment of the El-Azhar University, which is almost entirely of this nature. Some of the village schools are aided by native charity, as are also some high schools. In 1878 Mahmound Suleiman constructed, at his own cost, and endowed liberally, at Abou-Tig, an industrial school in which are taught weaving, carpentry, blacksmithing and tanning. That school has now ninety-two pupils, all of whom are receiving their training free of charge. The khedive has an industrial school with 200 pupils, and there is a Mohammedan benevolent society at Alexandria, which has raised \$50,000 for an industrial school there. That school will accommodate over 500 pupils, and it has an endowment of about \$4000 per year. One of the princes of the khedive's family is starting a similar school for the training of princes, and the towns of Fayoum and Beni-Suef are raising money for industrial schools. There is also talk of a national university, which is being planned and supported by the government. This is favored by many of the leading Egyptians, and Lord Cromer has advocated it in his report of this year. It is stated that this university will be absolutely scientific and literary, and that its doors will be wide open to all desirous of learning, irrespective of their origin or religion.

## The Personal Recollections of John L. Sullivan

The Big Fellow's Idea of What's the Matter With the Country in Financial Matters.

BY JOHN L. SULLIVAN. HIS line of year always reminds me of the fight I had with Frank Herald, of Philadelphia, which was finally pulled off 21 years ago the 18th of this month, after I had chased him from New York to Pittsburg. I polished Herald off in two rounds, making short work of him after I got him inside the ropes, but he sure led me a dizzy race before I cornered him and made him put up his hands and take what was coming to him. James Gordon Bennett was so struck on Herald (probably because Herald's name was the same as Bennett's paper) that he wanted to bet \$5000 that Herald could wallop any man in the world. Herald was boosted as the man who was to put me to the bad, and a lot of people were beginning to believe it. I finally got a match with Herald, but the cops stopped it, and Herald's crowd took a train for Pittsburg intending to cop out some glory by taking the stage and claiming I was afraid to meet him. I got wind of them taking the train, and I was on another train an hour later, for Pittsburg. By jumping things along, after my arrival in the morning, Tom Hughes arranged things for us to meet that night in Allegheny City, in the rink.

The smashing that I gave Herald in the two rounds made him easy for Joe Lannon later on, and Joe's defeat of Herald was the reason why Lannon was matched to fight Jake Kilrain in a hotel in Waterbury, Mass., the following March. Jake put Lannon out in 11 rounds, and this victory made a lot of rainier-chasers think Jake was to be my master. But all the guessing went wrong.

### Tips to the Author of the "Double Cross."

Philadelphia Jack O'Brien is going to write a play called the "Double Cross" and he's going to show up all the things that made the preliminaries in a faked fight. That's what Jack says, and there-

fore it may not be true. But he ought to be able to get all the actors in the right places in a play of that kind, for he knows, if anybody does. He might engage that celebrated actor, Jim Corbett, for the star part, with Kid McCoy as the faithful friend and Joe Gans as the soubrette, and some of the promoters for heavy villains. Jack himself will shine best taking the money at the door, for he don't play unless he hitches up with the mazzonina.

For a wind-up to the play all the fakers and get-rich-quick fighters might be dumped into a tank, and it would sure be popular, if the drink is made plenty wet and deep. But I'd advise the victim of the double cross to keep quiet for a while and give the sporting public a chance to forget some things. He's made a long meal ticket out of the easy marks that have been falling for loaded dice and he ought to let it go at that for the present.

O'Brien must be suffering from the heat when he got the returns from the Fitzgibbon fight. "Poor Fitz, he tried for a third term."

### What's the Matter With Us.

The trouble with the whole country is that everybody that has a look-in to corner some money wants to pinch all there is outside the mint. All kinds of businesses have gone crooked. There's crooked fighting, crooked booze and all kinds of crooked stuff put up for the public to eat and get the stomach ache. The fellows that run the stock market have put their own game so far on the blink that since Lawson peached they may have to get down to plain porch-climbing to pull off a living.

"Take the booze business as a sample of how the little man gets shook down. Twenty-five years ago you never heard of anybody getting sent to the crazy-house from drinking. Nowadays it's a common thing to hear of somebody going off his nut for fair because he can't stand the stuff. It's because they take a few cents' worth of carbolic acid and red pepper, shake it up in 50 gallons of rain

### Human Hair Imbedded in Oak.

Greenfield (Ind.) Dispatch to New York. After four two-inch boards had been taken off an oak log at James Webb's sawmill, a walnut peg, an inch in diameter and not long, was found which had reached the heart of the big log, where, it is estimated, it had been driven, probably 75 years ago. At the end of the peg was a coil of black hair, long and silken. Old people of the neighborhood are of the opinion that the coil of hair was placed there in accordance with a prevalent custom of pioneer times. This custom provided that when a man and wife could not get along or agree, instead of separating, as in these days, the neighbors cut a lock of hair from the head of each. A hole was then bored in a thirty tree and the locks of hair were driven to the heart by a walnut pin. After that it was believed the couple would live happily ever after.